

September 1967

STATEMENT ON THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

In 19 years, while struggling to protect itself from physical destruction, Israel has become not only a haven for the survivors of the Hitler holocaust, but a center of intellectual dynamism and one of the world's great sources of scientific research.

Enabled to develop in peace, Israel's contribution to the region and to the world may rival in fruitfulness and enduring quality that of the ancient state in the days of the Bible.

To preserve and encourage so great a human and creative source is surely a major responsibility of the civilized world.

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Israel has given an extraordinary account of its capacity to defend itself against aggressors on the battlefield. By its own valor, it has surmounted a climactic, unified design to destroy it. Thus it has forestalled the dangers of a military confrontation between the major powers.

Alone among the major powers, the United States has evinced realistic initiative to seize the opportunity thus created for a settlement which could lead to ultimate reconciliation, the stabilization of the area and its development for the benefit of its peoples.

The undersigned support that initiative and the salients of United States policy as set forth in the five principles proposed by the President on June 19, 1967. We urge that this policy be fortified and pursued inside the United Nations and outside it with all the authority of our strength as a nation.

We firmly believe, as stated by our Government, that:

1. In fact, as in principle, there can be no return to the status quo ante, in the interests of peace and security;
2. The United States should continue to uphold the rights of Israel, as a sovereign State, directly to seek and negotiate a settlement with each of the warring States;
3. Every effort should be made by the United States to induce the warring States to enter into such negotiations.

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Direct negotiations provide no privilege to either side; they are common practice among sovereign States.

In the delimited atmosphere of a direct confrontation between the parties, insulated against the competitions and pressures of major or minor States, hard reality may prove more effective counsel and impetus for a settlement than the public debates of the past 20 years.

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The central issue is security and peace. Israel's security is bound up with our own. Without peace settlements entered into by Israel and each of the warring States, we are only storing up fuel for new outbreaks, with no assurance that a new encounter can be contained or restricted either to conventional weapons or to regional States.

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Once peace settlements have been reached, it becomes possible to tackle the formidable human and development problems of the region which have resisted solution until now.

SIGNATORIES, STATEMENT ON THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION
(Titles Used Are for Purposes of Identification Only)

CONRAD AIKEN Novelist and Poet	Brewster, Mass.
DR. CHRISTIAN B. ANFINSEN Chief, Laboratory of Chemical Biology, National Institutes of Health	Bethesda, Md.
ERNEST ANGELL Attorney; Chairman, American Civil Liberties Union	New York, N. Y.
THURMAN ARNOLD Attorney	Washington, D. C.
DR. ROBERT F. BACHER Provost, California Institute of Technology	Pasadena, Calif.
DR. KENNETH T. BAINBRIDGE Professor of Physics, Harvard University	Cambridge, Mass.
S. N. BEHRMAN Playwright and Author	New York, N. Y.
HON. FRANCIS BIDDLE U.S. Attorney General, 1941-45	Washington, D. C.
DR. FELIX BLOCH Professor of Physics, Leland Stanford University 1952 Nobel Laureate, Physics	Palo Alto, Calif.
ALEXANDER BROOK Painter	Sag Harbor, N. Y.
DR. ARTHUR F. BURNS John Bates Clark Professor of Economics, Columbia University Chairman, President's Council of Economic Advisors, 1953-56	New York, N. Y.
DR. S. CHANDRASEKHAR Professor of Physics and Astronomy, University of Chicago	Chicago, Ill.
PADDY CHAYEFISKY Playwright	New York, N. Y.
DR. ROBERT S. COHEN Chairman, Department of Physics, Boston University	Boston, Mass.

DR. CARL F. CORI Biochemist, Massachusetts General Hospital 1947 Nobel Laureate, Medicine and Physiology	Boston, Mass.
DR. ANDRE F. CURNAND Professor Emeritus of Medicine, College of Physicians & Surgeons of Columbia University 1956 Nobel Laureate, Medicine and Physiology	New York, N. Y.
MALCOLM COWLEY Writer and Critic President, National Institute of Arts and Letters, 1956-59, 1962-65	Sherman, Conn.
JEAN DALRYMPLE Director, Light Opera and Drama, New York City Center	New York, N. Y.
DR. PAUL DOTY Professor of Chemistry, Harvard University	Cambridge, Mass.
DR. RENE DUBOS Member and Professor, The Rockefeller University	New York, N. Y.
DR. FREEMAN J. DYSON Professor of Physics, Institute for Advanced Study	Princeton, N. J.
DR. ERIK H. ERIKSON Professor of Human Development, Harvard University	Cambridge, Mass.
DR. LOUIS F. FIESER Professor of Chemistry, Harvard University	Cambridge, Mass.
DR. HAROLD H. FISHER Professor of History Emeritus, Hoover Institution, Stanford University	Stanford, Calif.
PAUL A. FREUND Professor of Law, Harvard University President, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1964-66	Cambridge, Mass.
DR. ELI GINZBERG Professor of Economics, Columbia University Government Consultant on Human Resources and Manpower	New York, N. Y.
DR. LEO GOLDBERG Chairman, Department of Astronomy, Harvard University	Cambridge, Mass.
DR. MAURICE GOLDBERGER Member, National Academy of Sciences	Bayport, N. Y.
PERCIVAL GOODMAN, F.A.I.A. Professor, School of Architecture, Columbia University	New York, N. Y.

WILLIAM T. GOSSETT Attorney; President, American Bar Foundation, 1965-66	Detroit, Mich.
DR. LAWRENCE M. GOULD Professor of Geology, University of Arizona Former President, American Association for the Advancement of Science	Tucson, Ariz.
MILTON HANDLER Professor of Law, Columbia University	New York, N. Y.
DR. SEYMOUR E. HARRIS Littauer Professor Emeritus, Harvard University	La Jolla, Calif.
DR. HUDSON HOAGLAND Executive Director, Worcester Foundation of Experimental Biology President, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1961-64	Shrewsbury, Mass.
DR. ROBERT HOFSTADTER Professor of Physics, Stanford University 1961 Nobel Laureate, Physics	Stanford, Calif.
DR. GERALD HOLTON Professor of Physics, Harvard University	Cambridge, Mass.
DR. J. J. HOOKER Head, Department of Economics; Acting Head, Department of Politics, The Catholic University of America	Washington, D. C.
DR. CHARLES HUGGINS Director, Ben May Laboratory, University of Chicago 1966 Nobel Laureate, Medicine and Physiology	Chicago, Ill.
FANNIE HURST Novelist	New York, N. Y.
ELI JACQUES KAHN, F.A.I.A. Architect	New York, N. Y.
DR. JOSEPH KAPLAN Professor of Physics, University of California, Los Angeles President, International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics	Los Angeles, Calif.
KIVIE KAPLAN President, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People	Chestnut Hill, Mass.
DR. ARTHUR KORNBERG Professor of Biochemistry, Stanford University 1959 Nobel Laureate, Medicine and Physiology	Palo Alto, Calif.

MRS. OLGA KOUSSEVITZKY President, American International Music Fund	New York, N. Y.
DR. POLYKARP KUSCH Professor of Physics, Columbia University 1955 Nobel Laureate, Physics	New York, N. Y.
DR. JOSHUA LEDERBERG Professor of Genetics, Medical School, Stanford University 1958 Nobel Laureate, Medicine and Physiology	Palo Alto, Calif.
DR. FRITZ A. LIPMANN Professor of Biochemistry, The Rockefeller University 1953 Nobel Laureate, Medicine and Physiology	New York, N. Y.
GEORGE LONDON Opera Singer President, American Guild of Musical Artists	New York, N. Y.
HENRI MARCEAU Curator, John G. Johnson Collection	Philadelphia, Pa.
DR. H. F. MARK Dean Emeritus, Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn	New York, N. Y.
DR. EDWIN M. McMILLAN Professor of Physics, University of California, Berkeley 1951 Nobel Laureate, Chemistry	Berkeley, Calif.
DR. STERLING M. McMURRIN Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, University of Utah U.S. Commissioner of Education, 1961-62	Salt Lake City, Utah
JAMES A. MICHENER Author	Pipersville, Pa.
LUDWIG MIES van der ROHE Architect Professor Emeritus, Illinois Institute of Technology	Chicago, Ill.
REAR ADMIRAL SAMUEL ELIOT MORISON, USNR Ret. Historian	Cambridge, Mass.
ROBERT MOTHERWELL Artist	New York, N. Y.
DR. JAY OREAR Professor of Physics, Cornell University	Ithaca, N. Y.

DR. GREGORY PINCUS Research Director, Worcester Foundation for Experimental Biology Research Professor of Biology, Boston University Graduate School	Shrewsbury, Mass.
HOBSON PITTMAN Artist and Lecturer	Bryn Mawr, Pa.
DR. I. I. RABI University Professor Emeritus, Columbia University 1944 Nobel Laureate, Physics	New York, N. Y.
HON. SIMON H. RIFKIND Attorney	New York, N. Y.
DR. DAVID RITTENBERG Chairman, Department of Biochemistry, College of Physicians & Surgeons of Columbia University	New York, N. Y.
DR. PEYTON ROUS Member Emeritus, The Rockefeller University 1966 Nobel Laureate, Medicine and Physiology	New York, N. Y.
DR. ALBERT B. SABIN Distinguished Service Professor, University of Cincinnati	Cincinnati, Ohio
DR. JONAS SALK Physician-Scientist Director, Salk Foundation for Biological Studies	La Jolla, Calif.
DORE SCHARY Writer and Director	New York, N. Y.
HARRY SCHERMAN Chairman of the Board, Book-of-the-Month Club	New York, N. Y.
DR. LEONARD I. SCHIFF Professor of Physics, Stanford University	Menlo Park, Calif.
DR. WILLIAM R. SEARS Professor, Cornell University	Ithaca, N. Y.
DR. EMILIO SEGRE Professor of Physics, University of California, Berkeley 1959 Nobel Laureate, Physics	Berkeley, Calif.
DR. WILLIAM SHOCKLEY Alexander M. Poniatoff Professor of Engineering Science, Stanford University 1956 Nobel Laureate, Physics	Stanford, Calif.

DR. S. M. ULAM
Professor of Mathematics, University of Colorado
Member, National Academy of Sciences

Boulder, Colo.

DR. HAROLD C. UREY
Professor of Chemistry at Large, University of California, San Diego
1934 Nobel Laureate, Chemistry

La Jolla, Calif.

MARK VAN DOREN
Professor Emeritus of English, Columbia University
Pulitzer Prize Poet and Author

Falls Village, Conn.

DR. SELMAN A. WAKSMAN
Professor Emeritus, Institute of Microbiology, Rutgers University
1952 Nobel Laureate, Medicine and Physiology

New Brunswick, N. J.

DR. GEORGE WALD
Professor of Biology, Harvard University

Cambridge, Mass.

DR. WARREN WEAVER
Retired Scientific Executive
Former Advisor to Foundations and Government Agencies

New Milford, Conn.

HERMAN WOUK
Author

Washington, D. C.

DR. HERBERT F. YORK
Professor of Physics, University of California, San Diego
Vice Chairman, President's Science Advisory Committee

La Jolla, Calif.

DR. JERROLD R. ZACHARIAS
Professor of Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Cambridge, Mass.